

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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C O N F I D E N T I A L TEGUCIGALPA 1840

MEXICO AND SAN JOSE FOR DEA

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, SNAR, HO
SUBJ: FERRARI KIDNAPPING DRUG CASE

REF: (A) TEGUCIGALPA 1368, (B) TEGUCIGALPA 1243

1. MOST OF THE LOW LEVEL CRIMINALS INVOLVED IN THE FERRARI KIDNAPPING AND LATER ATTEMPTED MURDER OF CARLOS FILIPE MADRID (REF A) ARE NOW BEING HELD BY THE POLICE. THEY ARE BUSILY PROVIDING CONTRADICTORY STORIES AND ACCUSING EACH OTHER OF ACTUALLY BEING THE "HIT MEN". NEITHER THE FERRARI'S FATE NOR THE WHEREABOUTS OF ALLEGED GANG LEADER RAMON MATTA HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED, ALTHOUGH THE FORMER ARE PRESUMABLY DEAD.

2. ONE REPORTER, WRITING IN 'LA PRENSA', CLAIMED THAT THE FERRARI'S MAY HAVE ARRANGED THEIR OWN DISSAPPEARANCE AFTER BEING THREATENED BY UNNAMED MILITARY OFFICERS. HE CITED SOME CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE.
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DENCE. THIS THEORY CONTRADICTS THE STORY PROVIDED BY ONE KIDNAPPER THAT IT WAS ARRANGED FOR VENGEANCE AND ANOTHER STORY, BY THE REYES BROTHERS, WHO CLAIM THEY WERE HIRED TO MURDER THE FERRARI'S BECAUSE GANG LEADER RAMON MATTA BALLASTEROS THOUGHT THEY HAD CHEATED HIM.

3. COMMENT: WHATEVER THE TRUE STORY BEHIND THE FERRARI DISAPPEARANCE.

PEARANCE (AND EACH OF THE ACCUSED IS OBVIOUSLY MINIMIZING HIS OWN PARTICIPATION),THEYWERE CLEARLY INVOLVED IN LARGE SCALE NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING. THIS WHOLE MATTER WOULD, HOWEVER, BE NO MORE THAN A SORDID GANGLAND AFFAIR TO BE CLARIFIED BY LEGAL AUTHORITIES WERE IT NOT FOR THE PERSISTENT RUMORS AND PRESS IMPLICATIONS OF HIGH-LEVEL HONDURAN MILITARY INVOLVEMENT. THE MATTER NOW GOES TO THE GLACIALLY-SLOW HONDURAN COOURT SYSTEM WHERE, IN THE ABSENCE OF FRESH REVELATIONS, IT COULD DRAG ON FOR SOME TIME, WITH INCONCLUSIVE RESULTS, PROBABLY TO THE RELIEF OF ANY OTHERS WHO MIGHT BE INVOLVED. THE RECENT (APPARENTLY UNCONNECTED) ARREST OF THREE U.S. CITIZENS ALLEGEDLY INVOLVED IN NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING HAS CONTRIBUTED TO A GROWING PUBLIC AWARENESS THAT A HONDURAN CONNECTION INDEED EXISTS AND COULD PROBABLY ONLY DO SO WITH SOME OFFICIAL COMPLICITY. IN A MILITARY GOVERNMENT, AMONG WHOSE JUSTIFICATIONS FOR TAKING POWER WAS ITS DESIRE FOR REFORM AND DISGUST WITH CIVILIAN CORRUPTION, SUCH ALLEGATIONS, IF PROVEN COULD WELL HAVE IMPORTANT POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS. IT COULD, FOR EXAMPLE, PRECIPITATE INCREASED DEMAND FOR AMORE RAPID RETURN TO CONSTITUTIONAL RULE AND CLOUD THE CHANCES OF ANY POTENTIAL MILITARY PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE. THE CIVILIAN POLITICAL PARTIES WOULD NOT BE ADVERS TO EITHER OF THESE DEVELOPMENTS. THIS MAY ALSO ACCOUNT IN PART FOR MILITARY SENSITIVITIES THAT THE PRESS MIGHT BE INVOLVED IN A CAMPAIGN TO DISCREDIT THE ARMED FORCES (REF B), RATHER THAN SIMPLY REPORTING EVENTS.

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